

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER



**CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER** provides expertise on cultural heritage policy and supports the protection and preservation of cultural heritage worldwide. The Center serves as the secretariat for the interagency Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee and administers the Cultural Property Protection Program, the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, the Iraq and Syria Cultural Heritage Initiatives, and other special programs.

Through the **CULTURAL PROPERTY PROTECTION PROGRAM**, the Cultural Heritage Center administers the Department's treaty responsibilities for the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property as enabled by U.S. domestic law. Through this process, the U.S. may enter into agreements with other countries to impose U.S. import restrictions on archaeological or ethnological material when pillage of such materials places a nation's cultural heritage in jeopardy. These agreements also promote longterm safeguards for protecting cultural heritage; and promote international access to cultural property for educational, scientific, and cultural purposes. The U.S. has active bilateral agreements with 17 countries, and has special emergency protection for Iraq and Syria.

The **U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION** awards small and large grants for the preservation of cultural sites, cultural objects, and forms of traditional cultural expression in developing countries around the world. Each year, U.S. ambassadors to more than 140 countries are invited to submit project proposals that address important cultural preservation needs. Since 2001, the program has awarded \$74 million for close to 1,000 projects in more than 125 countries.

The **IRAQ CULTURAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE** includes the Future of Babylon project, the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage, professional development and upgrades to the Iraq Museum, and

other collaborations with the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and U.S. partner institutions, designed to build local capacity for protection and preservation at Iraq's museums and heritage sites.

The **SYRIA CULTURAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE** includes close monitoring of looting at archaeological sites, compiling a map and inventory of more than 1,000 major cultural heritage sites, and supporting the production of the Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk.

THE **CULTURAL ANTIQUITIES TASK FORCE** promotes close coordination among U.S. Government agencies to demonstrate that the U.S. is taking a leading role in international efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of all countries. The Task Force supports U.S. and international diplomatic and law enforcement efforts to combat looting, theft, and trafficking of cultural property by means of training for cultural heritage and law enforcement professionals; regional workshops to promote cooperation among countries with cultural heritage at risk and between them and U.S. agencies; and cooperation with international organizations. For example, the Center supports the International Council on Museums for the creation and publication of Red Lists of cultural objects at risk from looting and theft.



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